

**FORM B - BUILDING**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

F

FORM NO.

539



OWN ACTON

ADDRESS 65 River Street

HISTORIC NAME Francis Dwight (rental)

USE: Present single family residential

Original single family residential

**DESCRIPTION**

DATE ca. 1860

SOURCE Nylander notes

STYLE Greco-Italianate

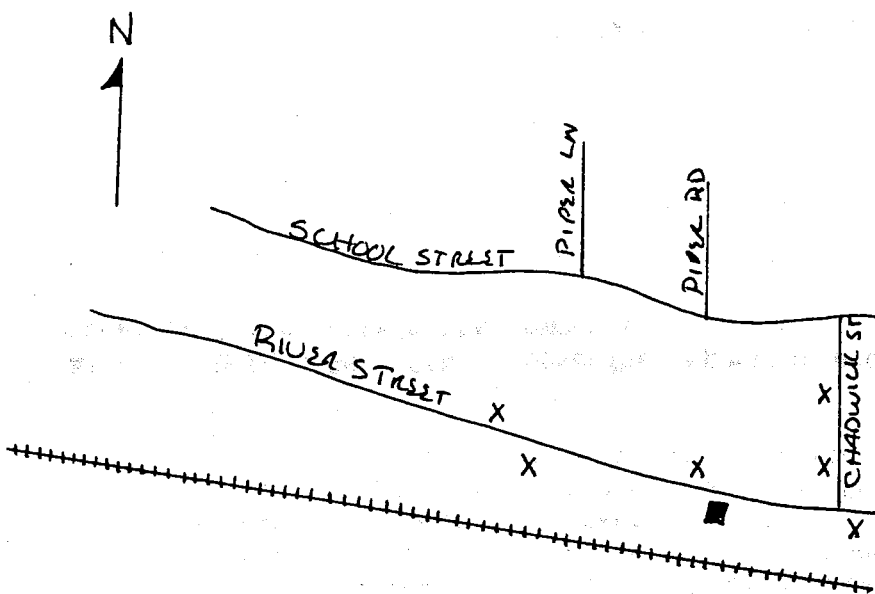
Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric wood clapboard

Outbuildings 1 small shed behind house

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).

Indicate north Assessor's Map # H-3A-48



Major Alterations (with dates) Side ell on

west side - mid 20th c., new door

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting South side of River St. between

two industrial sites Lazaro Paving and wood

working mill - rural setting with r.r and

brook behind - Greco-Italianate houses on

School St.

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date April 1990

UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

ACTON

Form No:

F-539

Property Name: 65 River Street

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION - 65 RIVER STREET

The 3-bay, 1 1/2 story gable front dwelling is somewhat larger than many side hall plan dwellings due to the 1 1/2 story side ell on the east and the 1-story side ell on the west side. Built on a granite foundation, the house is sheathed in wood clapboards and has an asphalt shingle roof. The 1-story side ell on the west side has a concrete foundation and appears to be a mid 20th century addition. The chimney in the main block is located below the ridge on the east side. There is an exterior chimney that is tapered at the end of the 1-story side ell.

The side hall entrance of the main facade is the most changed part of the dwelling. A modern interpretation of an older door has been used. The light oak panelled door has a multi colored square light with an unusual design. The door enframingent is plain with a narrow applied molding and a recessed panel on the frieze board. Windows have 6/6 sash and are set in flat frames with a narrow applied molding. There are two first story and two second story windows on the main facade. The projecting molded cornice with thin but wide returns is supported by narrow corner posts and has a narrow fascia board as well. A watertable marks the bottom edge of the building.

On the west side there is one small square stairhall window with a flower stain glass design and the modern projecting 1-story ell in which there are two small 6/6 windows within one frame. The drop of the terrain is significant at the rear and the 1-story side ell is a 3-story ell at the rear. The side ell on the east side has two first story windows with 6/6 sash and an enclosed entrance porch on the gable end.

## HISTORICAL STATEMENT

One of three Greco-Italianate houses in this area of River Street, this house was also lived in by mill workers. Built in ca. 1860 the house was owned first by Francis Dwight (1815-1880) who had a woodworking mill on River Street at Chadwick Street. Dwight had bought the mill, land parcels on each side of the mill and all the land on the west side of Chadwick Street in 1858. He built 11-13 Chadwick Street for his own residence and used this modest house for rental property. The mill, Dwight's house, and this cottage were all purchased by Charles A. Harrington (1815-1896) to settle Dwight's estate in 1881. Harrington lived on High Street and owned substantial property and mills in South Acton, including the Faulkner Mills at Mill Corner.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom



### **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

The property is eligible for National Register nomination as part of the School-River-Main Mill and Commercial Historic District for Criteria:

A - its association with the development of the railroad community from the 1840s with thriving mills and retail businesses on School, River and Main, as well as the owners and workers housing.

C - its representation of the Greek Revival and Italianate architecture most popular in developing the community of South Acton.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

South Acton, once part of the 1000-acre farm granted to Concord's Major Simon Willard, was sold to Ephraim and Samuel Jones and Jonathan Knight in 1701. The first fulling mill was established and throughout the 18th and 19th century mill privileges on Fort Pond east of Main Street were developed. South Acton became the first village center in Acton, preceding Acton Centre, which revolved around the Common, Meeting House, and school from 1806. With the advent of the Fitchburg Railroad in 1844 came the major growth of South Acton Village as an industrial village.

River Street, laid out in 1847 for access to the mills built along Fort Pond Brook, runs from School Street near Mill Corner to Parker Street in the eastern section of South Acton. Paralleling the railroad and the stream (Fort Pond Brook), River Street was the location of several important 19th century mills for woodworking and textile manufacturing. The road is only sparsely developed with dwellings that were for the most part associated with the 19th century mills.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

- Atlas/Birdseye/Map: 1870, 1875, 1886, 1889, 1892.
- Acton Historical Society. Library Files.
- Nylander and Forbes. "Mill Corner", 1989.
- Nylander, Robert. research notes.
- Phalen, Harold. History of the Town of Acton, 1954.

